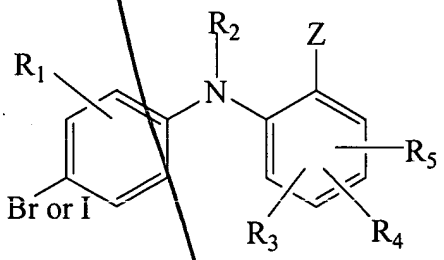

I

wherein:

R_1 is hydrogen, hydroxy, C_1-C_8 alkyl, C_1-C_8 alkoxy, halo, trifluoromethyl, or CN;

R_2 is hydrogen ;

R_3, R_4, and R_5 independently are hydrogen, hydroxy, halo, trifluoromethyl, C_1-C_8 alkyl, C_1-C_8 alkoxy, nitro, CN, or -(O or $NH)_m$-$(CH_2)_n$-R_9, where R_9 is hydrogen, hydroxy, COOH, or $NR_{10}R_{11}$;

n is 0-4;

m is 0 or 1;

R_{10} and R_{11} independently are hydrogen or C_1-C_8 alkyl, or taken together with the nitrogen to which they are attached can complete a 3-10 member cyclic ring optionally containing 1, 2, or 3 additional heteroatoms selected from O, S, NH, or N-C_1-C_8 alkyl;

Z is $COOR_7$, tetrazolyl, $CONR_6R_7$, $CONHNR_{10}R_{11}$, or CH_2OR_7;

R_6 and R_7 independently are hydrogen, C_1-C_8 alkyl, C_2-C_8 alkenyl, C_2-C_8 alkynyl, (CO)-C_1-C_8 alkyl, aryl, heteroaryl, or C_3-C_{10} cycloalkyl optionally containing one, two, or three heteroatoms selected from O, S, NH, or N alkyl; or R_6 and R_7 together with the nitrogen to which they are attached complete a 3-10 member cyclic ring optionally containing 1,2, or 3 additional heteroatoms selected from O, S, NH, or N alkyl; and wherein any of the foregoing alkyl, alkenyl, aryl, heterocyclic, and alkynyl groups can be unsubstituted or substituted by halo, hydroxy, C_1-

A2 Cont Sub B' Cont

C_6 alkoxy, amino, nitro, C_1-C_4 alkylamino, di(C_1- C_4) alkylamino, C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl, phenyl, phenoxy, C_3-C_5 heteroaryl, or C_3- C_5 heteroaryloxy;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, ester, amide, or prodrug thereof.

A3

8. (Once Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the MEK inhibitor is a compound of Formula (I) wherein (a) R_1 is hydrogen, methyl, methoxy, fluoro, chloro, or bromo; (b) R_2 is hydrogen; (c) R_3, R_4, and R_5 independently are hydrogen, fluoro, chloro, bromo, iodo, methyl, methoxy, or nitro; (d) R_{10} and R_{11} independently are hydrogen or methyl; (e) Z is $COOR_7$, tetrazolyl, $CONR_6R_7$, $CONHNR_{10}R_{11}$, or CH_2OR_7; R_6 and R_7 independently are hydrogen, C_{1-4} alkyl, heteroaryl, or C_{3-5} cycloalkyl optionally containing one or two heteroatoms selected from O, S, or NH; or R_6 and R_7 together with the nitrogen to which they are attached complete a 5-6 member cyclic ring optionally containing 1 or 2 additional heteroatoms selected from O, NH or N-alkyl; and wherein any of the foregoing alkyl or aryl groups can be unsubstituted or substituted by halo, hydroxy, methoxy, ethoxy, or heteroaryloxy.

Sub B' Cont

A4

14. (Once Amended) The method of claim 1, comprising a MEK inhibitor having a structure selected from:

2- (2-chloro-4-iodophenylamino)-5-chloro-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluorobenzamide;

2- (4-iodophenylamino)-N- cyclopropylmethoxy-5-chloro-3,4-difluorobenzamide;

2- (4- iodophenylamino)-5-chloro-3,4-difluorobenzoic acid;

2- (2- chloro-4-iodophenylamino)-5-chloro-3,4-difluorobenzoic acid;

5-chloro-3,4-difluoro-2- (4-iodo-2-methylphenylamino)- benzoic acid; and

5-chloro-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4- difluoro-2- (4-iodo-2-methylphenylamino)-benzamide.

Sub B' Cont

15. (Once Amended) A method of treating or preventing arthritis in a patient in need of treatment, or suspected of developing arthritis, said method comprising the

step of administering an effective antiarthritic amount of a compound selected from:

A 4 Cont

2- (2-Chloro-4-iodophenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy- 3,4-difluorobenzamide;

2- (2-Methyl-4-iodophenylamino)-N-hydroxy-4-fluorobenzamide;

2- (2-Methyl-4-iodophenylamino)-N-hydroxy-3,4-difluoro- 5-bromobenzamide;

2- (2-Methyl-4-iodophenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy- 3,4-difluoro-5-bromobenzamide;

Claim B' Cont

2- (2-Methyl-4-iodophenylamino)-N-cyclobutylmethoxy- 3,4-difluoro-5-bromobenzamide;

2- (2-Chloro-4-iodophenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy- 3,4-difluoro-5-bromobenzamide;

2- (2-Chloro-4-iodophenylamino)-N-hydroxy-3,4-difluoro- 5-bromobenzamide;

2- (2-Chloro-4-iodophenylamino)-N-cyclobutylmethoxy- 3,4-difluorobenzamide;

2-(2-Chloro-4-iodophenylamino)-N-hydroxy-4-fluorobenzamide;

2- (2-Methyl-4-iodophenylamino)-N-hydroxy- 3,4-difluorobenzamide;

2- (2-Methyl-4-iodophenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy- 3,4,5-trifluorobenzamide; and

2- (2-Chloro-4-iodophenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy- 4-fluorobenzamide.

16. (Once Amended) The method of Claim 15 wherein said compound is selected from

2- (2-chloro-4-iodophenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy- 3,4-difluorobenzamide;

2- (2-Methyl-4-iodophenylamino)-N- cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4,5-trifluorobenzamide; and

2- (2-Chloro-4-iodophenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-4-fluorobenzamide.

Please add following new Claims 17, 18, and 19 as follows:

A 5

17. (New) A method of treating or preventing arthritis in a patient in need of treatment, or suspected of developing arthritis, said method comprising the step of administering an effective antiarthritic amount of 2-(2-Chloro-4-iodophenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy- 3,4-difluorobenzamide.

Sub B' Cont

18. (New) The method of Claim 8, wherein the MEK inhibitor is a compound of Formula (I) wherein: Z is $COOR_7$; R_7 is H, pentafluorophenyl, or tetrazolyl; and R_3, R_4, and R_5 are independently H, fluoro, or chloro.

19. (New) The method of Claim 8, wherein the MEK inhibitor is a compound of Formula (I) wherein: Z is $COOR_7$; R_7 is H, pentafluorophenyl, or tetrazolyl; and R_3, R_4, and R_5 independently are fluoro.